(a) the total number of diesel/petrol retail outlets allotted in the country during 2004 and 2005, State/Union Territory-wise and year-wise;

(b) whether Government propose to formulate a new policy for allotment of petrol retail outlets; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMANISHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) The total number of retail outlets allotted by the public sector OMCs in the country during the years 2004 and 2005 (from January to June 2005) was 6,676 and 1,799 respectively.

Based on certain broad parameters advised by the Government to the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), the latter have framed their guidelines for the selection of retail outlet dealerships, LPG distributorships and SKO-LDO dealerships for viable locations in the country, and have been making selections and allotments of such dealerships/distributorships in terms of these guidelines. These guidelines, which are objective and transparent in nature, provide for a detailed procedure to be followed by the OMCs in making selection/allotment of dealers/distributors. At present, Government do not contemplate to formulate any new policy in the matter.

Benami allotments in reserved categories

2297. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR:
SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any complaints against some rich and influential persons of general category for having got benami allotment of petrol pumps and LPG agencies actually earmarked for SCs/STs;

(b) if so, the details of such complaints, State-wise, particularly from Punjab;

(c) the action taken against the persons who got such benami allotments in their names and the Oil Marketing Companies which made these benami allotments, State-wise; and

(d) the measures taken to stop such benami allotments of petrol pumps/LPG agencies initially allotted to SCs/STs?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRIMANISHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) As per the elaborate mechanism provided for selection of dealers/distributors by the public sector oil marketing companies (OMCs), the chances of benami allotment of dealerships/distributorships, i.e., allotment of dealerships/distributorships to persons other than those who are selected for such dealerships/ distributorships, are little. However, the OMCs receive, from time to time, complaints against benami operation of dealerships, which are earmarked for Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe category. Such complaints are investigated by the OMCs and if the complaints are established, action is taken by the OMCs in line with the dealership/distributorship agreement. Information with regard to State-wise details of complaints of benami operation in respect of retail outlets (petrol pumps) and LPG distributorships is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

(d) At the time of interview of the applicants, the documents furnished by them along with their applications are verified with reference to the original copies of the documents. Thereafter, on receipt of the merit panel of selected candidates, the oil company concerned conducts the field investigation in respect of the selected candidate. During this investigation, the factual data given by the candidate in his/her application is again verified.

In addition, the oil company officers, while inspecting the outlets frequently, monitor whether the signatories to the dealership agreements are managing the dealership personally. If any doubt arises, then bank documents, sales tax registration, income tax returns, retail selling licences and other relevant documents, etc., are checked to ensure that there is no benami operation. Whenever, any case of benami operation is detected, the matter is investigated and if this is established, action is taken by the OMCs.

IOC'S interest in overseas oil refineries

2298. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) proposes to buy a Turkish refinery;